

## Formal Opening Virginia Packaging Application Center (August 4, 2006)

### STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN RICK BOUCHER

Formal Opening of the Virginia Packaging Applications Center

Dabney Lancaster Community College

August 4, 2006

Clifton Forge, Virginia

I am pleased to return to Alleghany County this morning to celebrate the opening of the new Virginia Packaging Applications Center at Dabney Lancaster Community College. In just a few short weeks classes will begin at this new state of the art facility, which will provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary for employment and advancement in the packaging industry.

The packaging industry is one of the fastest growing in the nation, and the Virginia Packaging Applications Center will impart to students from across the region the skills necessary to gain access to this highly specialized field, and in the process, further stimulate the economy in Alleghany County.

A packaging company is responsible for placing the physical packaging on finished products before they are shipped to retail locations and sold, and many product manufacturers rely on packaging companies to provide the outer packaging for their products. Students at Dabney Lancaster will now have access to the training necessary to set-up, operate and maintain the equipment used in this growing field. In addition, workers already employed by a packaging company will have the opportunity to obtain advanced training and make use of the latest technologies utilized by the packaging industry.

Dabney Lancaster courses will teach specific manufacturing skills both through a traditional format and on-line by enabling students to log onto the Internet through the College's server. Student learning is then validated through hands-on practice on industrial equipment that includes pneumatic, hydraulic, and electrical systems. Completion of these learning modules is self-paced and self-assessing, allowing for differentiated learning styles.

Classes in quality control, robotics, and machinery will be offered and will prepare students to set up, operate, troubleshoot, and perform some basic maintenance on machinery used in packaging. This intensive program will prepare students for any manufacturing job with specialized skills in packaging.

Students enrolled in the curriculum will be able to pursue three types of degrees, a career studies certificate in advanced manufacturing and packaging fundamentals, a college certificate in advanced manufacturing and packaging, and an

associate of applied studies degree. In addition, officials at Dabney Lancaster are now working with 4 year schools to develop a 4 year degree program, as well as with area high schools to offer introductory packaging courses and dual enrollment courses that students can begin in 10th or 11th grades.

The closest community college to offer a similar curriculum is located in Ohio, meaning that the Virginia Packaging Applications Center will attract students from across Virginia and neighboring states who are seeking to acquire skills in this growing field. VPAC's first class of students will begin in the Fall of this year, and both day and evening classes will be offered in the fall of 2007.

The success we celebrate today is the result of several years of hard work by those present this morning to secure the funding necessary for the construction of the Packaging Center and to develop a curriculum that prepares students to excel in the field.

The total project cost for the Virginia Packaging Applications Center is \$869,000. Federal funds in the amount of \$469,000, which I obtained in three separate federal appropriations, have been used to renovate 3,500 square feet of space at Scott Hall for the creation of new classroom and lab space for packaging equipment and complementary multi-media learning modules.

In addition to the federal appropriations, Governors Warner and Kaine have supported this project with \$380,000 from the Virginia Works Initiative, which has also enabled the renovation and construction of classroom space, the purchase of equipment, and the development of the Advanced Manufacturing and Packaging Technology curriculum. Today's ceremony is an example of what can be achieved when citizens and government officials at the local, state, and federal levels work together in aid of a common purpose.

I would like to say a word of thanks to a number of individuals who have been instrumental in the success of this project. Dr. Dick Teaff, President of Dabney Lancaster Community College deserves our recognition for his vision in bringing the Virginia Packaging Applications Center to the College and for his continued leadership of this outstanding institution. Dick originated the concept for the center and sought my help and that of Governors Warner and Kaine in obtaining the needed funding.

I would also like to thank Gary Keenor, the Vice President of Continuing Education and Workforce Services at Dabney Lancaster who's work helped advance this project and enable the success that we celebrate today.

I would like to recognize Dr. Glenn DuBois, Chancellor of the Virginia Community College System, whose efforts on behalf Dabney Lancaster and Community Colleges in our State ensure that students across the Commonwealth have access to higher education and the best workforce training programs. I would also like to thank James Buzzard, President of MeadWestvaco for his role in supporting this project.

Finally, I want to thank my former district director, Linda DiYorio, for her persistent and persuasive work in seeking the federal monies that aided the project's development.

With today's formal opening of the Virginia Packaging Applications Center, we celebrate a new avenue of economic opportunity for the residents of Alleghany County. I thank everyone here for the tremendous efforts and support which have made the new Virginia Packaging Applications Center possible.

